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THE HISTORY OF FRANCES SLOCUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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This research traces the history of Frances Slocum Elementary School in Fort Wayne, Indiana from its inception in 1937 to its closure in 1981 with a particular emphasis on the impact of broad societal and demographic trends. The research is based in large part on primary sources including interviews with former students, teachers, PTA officers and members of the surrounding community. The researcher was also given access to many primary documents and is able to give a taste of what school life was like during the middle years of this century. Because the surrounding community remained economically stable during the life of the school, the impact of broader trends such as the "baby boom," the aging of the urban population, the suburbanization of the younger population and the population flight from the "rust belt" following the oil shock of 1973 can be ascertained and discussed. The research concludes that ultimately "demographics are destiny" for an urban elementary school. Administrators of school districts facing significant demographic shifts can gain insight from the "cradle to grave" study of one school.